

Ethics Consultant Proficiency Assessment Tool[†]

About the Consultant Proficiency Assessment Tool

This assessment tool is designed to help individuals assess their proficiency level with respect to the skills and knowledge required to provide competent health care ethics consultation.

Using the Results to Create an Individualized Professional Development Plan

Following completion of the assessment tool, the Ethics Consultation Coordinator should meet with the consultant to review the results and develop an individualized professional development plan to improve upon the consultant's baseline proficiencies. Consultants should have a minimum of a **basic level of skill or knowledge in all assessed items**.

For consultants who are “not skilled” or “not knowledgeable” in respect to one or more items, an immediate action plan should be developed to bring the consultant to a basic level. For consultants who already have at least basic skills or knowledge on every item, a plan should be designed to help the consultant develop advanced-level skill or knowledge in more of the proficiencies.

Identifying Knowledge and Skill Gaps in the Consultation Service

One of the responsibilities of the Ethics Consultation Coordinator is to ensure that the consultation service as a whole possesses the set of skills and knowledge identified in the *Core Competencies* report. The *Ethics Consultant Proficiency Assessment Tool* can help identify knowledge and skill gaps, especially in areas where at least one member of the ethics consultation service must have advanced skill or knowledge as urged by the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities. These items are denoted by an * asterisk on the assessment tool. The *Advanced Proficiencies Tracking Log* can help identify those consultants with advanced expertise.

How Often to Use the Consultant Proficiency Assessment Tool

The tool was designed to help consultants assess change over time and therefore we suggest that consultants repeat the assessment and update their individualized professional development plans on an annual basis. In addition, we encourage the use of the proficiency tool with all consultants who are new to the service. This will help to establish the consultant's baseline proficiencies and to ensure that new consultants receive sufficient mentoring and support.

[†] This tool is based on a report from the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities (ASBH) entitled *Core Competencies for Health Care Ethics Consultation* (1998).

Ethics Consultant Proficiency Assessment Tool

The purpose of this tool is to help consultants assess their proficiency with respect to the skills and knowledge required to provide competent ethics consultation in health care.

After you complete this tool, you should work with your Ethics Consultation Coordinator to create an individualized professional development plan.

DIRECTIONS: Please place an “X” in the box that best describes your present skill or knowledge level.

*Note: ASBH suggests that at least one individual on the consultation service possess advanced skill or knowledge for specific elements. These items are noted with an * asterisk.*

	Novice	Basic		Advanced	
Interpersonal Skills: skills needed to effectively communicate with others, and to develop positive relationships <i>Rate your ability to:</i>	Not Skilled	Somewhat Skilled	Skilled	Very Skilled	Expert
Listen well, and communicate interest, respect, support, and empathy to participants*					
Educate participants regarding the ethical dimensions of the case					
Elicit the moral views of participants in a nonthreatening way*					
Enable participants to communicate effectively and be heard by other participants*					
Accurately and respectfully represent the views of participants to others when needed*					
Recognize and address barriers to communication*					
Based on the preceding items , how would you rate your overall ability to effectively communicate with others and to develop positive relationships?					

	Novice	Basic		Advanced	
	Not Skilled	Somewhat Skilled	Skilled	Very Skilled	Expert
Process Skills: skills needed to facilitate formal and informal meetings, foster moral consensus, and gather, interpret, and document information.					
The next few items assess skill in facilitating formal and informal meetings.					
<i>Rate your ability to:</i>					
Identify key decision makers and other involved parties and include them in discussions					
Set ground rules for formal meetings (e.g., length, participants, purpose and structure, minutes)					
Express and stay within the limits of the ethics consultant's role during meetings					
Create an atmosphere of trust that respects privacy and confidentiality and that allows participants to feel free to express their concerns					
Based on the preceding items , how would you rate your overall ability to facilitate formal and informal meetings?*					

	Not Skilled	Somewhat Skilled	Skilled	Very Skilled	Expert
The next few items assess skill in fostering consensus among participants involved in the consultation.					
<i>Rate your ability to:</i>					
Attend to power imbalances and attempt to level the playing field					
Help individuals critically analyze the values underlying their assumptions, decision(s), and the possible consequences of that decision/those decisions					
Mediate among competing moral views					
Engage in creative problem solving (i.e., help parties to "think outside of the box")					
Create an atmosphere of trust that respects privacy and confidentiality and that allows participants to feel free to express their concerns					
Based on the preceding items , how would you rate your overall ability to foster consensus among parties involved in the consultation?*					

	Novice	Basic		Advanced	
<i>The next few items assess your ability to gather, interpret, and document information.</i>	Not Skilled	Somewhat Skilled	Skilled	Very Skilled	Expert
<i>Rate your ability to:</i>					
Gather and interpret information from the health record					
Visit and interview patients in various clinical settings					
Document the consult clearly and accurately in the health record					
Utilize institutional structures and resources to facilitate implementation of the chosen option					

Analytic Skills: skills needed to identify the nature of the value uncertainty or conflict that underlies the need for ethics consultation and analyze the value uncertainty or conflict that underlies the need for ethics consultation	Not Skilled	Somewhat Skilled	Skilled	Very Skilled	Expert
<i>The next few items assess skill in identifying the nature of the value uncertainty or conflict that underlies the need for ethics consultation.</i>					
<i>Rate your ability to:</i>					
Gather relevant data (e.g., medical facts, patients' preferences and interests, and other participants' preferences and interests)					
Assess the social and interpersonal dynamics of a consultation (e.g., power relations, racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious differences)					
Distinguish ethical dimensions of the consultation from other, often overlapping dimensions (e.g., legal, medical, psychiatric)					
Identify various assumptions that involved parties bring to the consultation (e.g., regarding quality of life, risk taking, hidden agendas)					
Identify, clarify, and distinguish the relevant values of involved participants					
Based on the preceding items , how would you rate your overall ability to identify the nature of the value uncertainty or conflict that underlies the need for ethics consultation?*					

	Novice	Basic		Advanced	
<i>The next few items assess skill in analyzing the value uncertainty or conflict that underlies the need for an ethics consultation.</i>	Not Skilled	Somewhat Skilled	Skilled	Very Skilled	Expert
<i>Rate your ability to:</i>					
Formulate an ethics question based on the circumstances of the case					
Identify the ethically appropriate decision maker (e.g., patient, surrogate, or health care team)					
Access relevant knowledge (e.g., bioethics, law, institutional policy, professional codes, religious teachings)					
Critically evaluate and apply relevant knowledge to the consultation (e.g., bioethics, law, institutional policy, professional codes, and religious teachings)					
Clarify relevant ethics concepts (e.g., confidentiality, privacy, informed consent, best interest)					
Identify and explain a range of ethically justifiable options and their consequences					
Evaluate evidence and arguments for and against different options					
Recognize personal limitations and possible areas of conflict between personal moral views and one's role in ethics consultation					
Based on the preceding items , how would you rate your overall ability to analyze the value uncertainty or conflict underlying the need for ethics consultation?*					

	Novice	Basic		Advanced	
Core Knowledge: Moral Reasoning	Not Knowledgeable	Somewhat Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable	Very Knowledgeable	Expert
Rate your knowledge of:					
Moral reasoning and ethics theory, including familiarity with a variety of approaches to ethical analysis (e.g., consequentialist, deontological, principle-based, casuistic)*					
Core Knowledge: Common Ethics Issues and Concepts					
Rate your knowledge of:					
Shared decision making (e.g., decision-making capacity, informed consent process, surrogate decision making, advance care planning, limits to patient choice)*					
End-of-life care (e.g., cardio-pulmonary resuscitation/CPR, life-sustaining treatments, medical futility, hastening death, death and postmortem issues)*					
Privacy and confidentiality (e.g., patient control of personal health information, exceptions to confidentiality, duty to warn) *					
Professionalism (e.g., conflict of interest, truth telling, difficult patients, cultural/religious/spiritual sensitivity)*					
Resource allocation (e.g., systems level or macroallocation, individual level or microallocation)*					
Business and management (e.g., performance incentives, data management, record keeping)*					
Government Service (e.g., fiduciary duty to the public, use of government resources, duty to report waste, fraud, or abuse)*					

	Novice	Basic		Advanced	
Core Knowledge: Common Ethics Issues and Concepts—cont'd	Not Knowledgeable	Somewhat Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable	Very Knowledgeable	Expert
<i>Rate your knowledge of</i>					
Everyday workplace (e.g., employee privacy, appropriate employee-employer relationships, openness to ethics discussion)*					
Research (e.g., informed consent for research)*					

	Novice	Basic		Advanced	
Health Care System *	Not Knowledgeable	Somewhat Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable	Very Knowledgeable	Expert
<i>Rate your knowledge of:</i>					
Health care systems, including knowledge of managed health care, governmental systems for financing care, etc.					
Clinical Context*					
<i>Rate your knowledge of:</i>					
Clinical literacy including ability to understand medical terms, disease processes, treatments, prognoses, medical decision making, current or emerging technologies, different roles, relationships, etc.					
The Local Health Care Institution*					
<i>Rate your knowledge of:</i>					
The local health care facility, including mission statement, organizational structure, range of services, population served, etc.					
Local facility policies related to ethics					
National policies related to ethics					

	Novice	Basic		Advanced	
	Not Knowledgeable	Somewhat Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable	Very Knowledgeable	Expert
Beliefs and Perspectives of the Local Patient and Staff Population <i>Rate your knowledge of:</i>					
Beliefs and perspectives that bear on the health care of racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious groups served by the facility					
Resources that can be accessed for understanding and interpreting cultural and faith communities					
Codes of Ethics <i>Rate your knowledge of:</i>					
Professional codes of conduct (e.g., medicine, nursing, health care executives) and other ethics guidelines or consensus statements (Presidents' commissions, etc.)					
Guidelines of accrediting organizations related to ethics (e.g., JCAHO, CAP)					
Health Law <i>Rate your knowledge of:</i>					
Relevant health law (e.g., federal, state, constitutional, statutory, and case law)					

Consultant Name: _____

Date Completed: _____

Advanced Proficiency Tracking Log

This log is designed to help the Ethics Consultation Coordinator easily identify which consultants possess the advanced knowledge and skills suggested by the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities.

Listed below are the proficiencies denoted with an * asterisk on the *Ethics Consultant Proficiency Assessment Tool*.

Advanced Interpersonal Skills	Consultant Name(s)
Listening and communicating interest, respect, support, and empathy to involved parties	
Eliciting the moral views of participants in a nonthreatening way	
Helping participants to communicate effectively and be heard by other parties	
Representing the views of participants to others when needed	
Recognizing barriers to communication	
Advanced Process Skills	
Facilitating formal and informal meetings	
Fostering consensus	
Advanced Analytic Skills	
Identifying nature of the value uncertainty or conflict underlying the need for ethics consultation	
Analyzing the value uncertainty or conflict underlying the need for ethics consultation	

Advanced Knowledge	Consultant Name(s)
Moral reasoning and ethics theory as it relates to ethics consultation	
Ethical issues and concepts: Shared decision making with patients	
Ethical issues and concepts: End-of-life care	
Ethical issues and concepts: Patient privacy and confidentiality	
Ethical issues and concepts: Professionalism in patient care	
Ethics issues and concepts: Resource allocation	
Ethical issues and concepts: Business and management	
Ethical issues and concepts: Research	
Ethical issues and concepts: Government service	
Ethical issues and concepts: Everyday workplace	
Health care system	
Clinical context	
Local health care institution	